

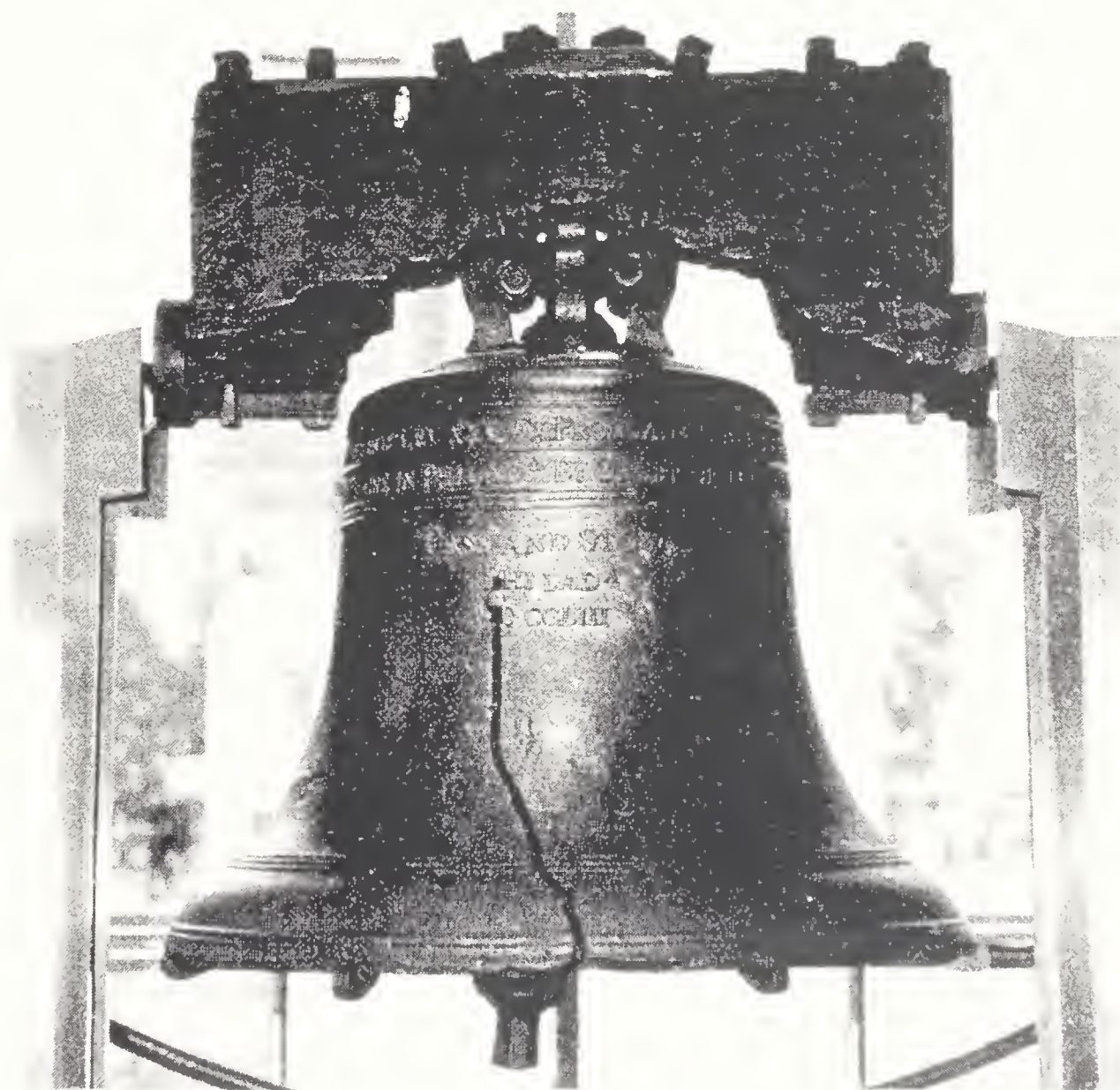


The COMMEMORATIVE TRAIL

SUSCC
P.O. Box 2335
Huntington Beach, CA 92647

The Journal for the Society for U.S. Commemorative Coins 2011
Vol. 28, No. 2 of 3

LIBERTY BELL



The Commemorative Trail

Official Publication of the Society for U.S. Commemorative Coins
2011, Volume 28, No. 2 of 3

SUSCC Departments

- 2 **The President's Message**
- 3 **The Vice President's Message**
- 4 **SUSCC Secretary's Report**

Articles & Features

- 5 **Columbian Souvenir Coin First Strike**
By Russell M. Frank
- 9 **Being There ... The Liberty Bell & Its Coinage**
By Darrin Dayton
- 12 **1946 – 1951 Booker T. Washington**
By Anthony Swiatek
- 31 **Arkansas – Robinson (PHOTO PROOF TM)**
- 33 **Pennsylvania State Commission**
- 34 **Collect or Retire**
- 35 **Talking Commemoratives**

BASIC EDITORIAL POLICY...

The Commemorative Trail publishes articles and features from a wide variety of authors and sources. To preserve the integrity of the authors and the contents of items submitted, your editor often leaves most everything intact. It should be stated that the contents of the material and the opinions stated therein do not necessarily reflect the positions and opinions of the editor or the society as a whole.

Do you have something for The Commemorative Trail?

Gary Beedon, SUSCC Editor, P.O. Box 2335, Huntington Beach, CA 92647

E-mail: beedon@earthlink.net

The President's Message

By Anthony Swiatek

GREETINGS FELLOW SOCIETY MEMBERS!

Received the following letter from Mike R.

"Mr. Swiatek, I estimated that the price for a strictly graded MS-65 1915 S Panama Pacific \$50 Octagonal half dollar was about \$133,000. Can you tell me why two individual pieces sold recently for \$115,000 each? DID I PAY TOO MUCH FOR MY COIN?"

Mike, the \$133,000 figure is correct for a strictly graded MS-65 example. Yes, there were two MS-65 Octagonal pieces which recently sold for \$115,000 each. Why the price discounts? The dealers needed cash. They knew that both pieces were lacking proper eye appeal for the MS-65 rating and were somewhat optimistically graded. The latter two words are the key words! They were really MS-64+ quintuple eagles at best which, for whatever reason, were housed in MS-65 holders! Both dealers were glad to no longer have these coins in their inventory.

May life's blessings cross your trail as you journey life's path.

Anthony J. Swiatek



The Vice President's Message

By Gregory N. Mirsky

Numismatics: A pursuit involving a veneer of scholarship hiding a core of greed. – attributed to Walter H. Breen
(September 5th, 1928 – April 27th, 1993)

While researching other topics for another pursuit of mine, I stumbled upon the above attributed quote from Walter Breen. Love or hate the man: he certainly was a character. The quote struck a chord within me. It is brutally true. Many in our hobby are driven to research, find differences, variations not only for the sake of intellectual advancement but hiding in the shadows of the lofty academic goals is the base desire to find a nuance that will make that collector's coins that much more valuable by differentiating it.

How many numismatic tomes have been written on obscure die variations and marriages, minting errors or purposefully manufactured sub-types like the 1922 Grant Star Half Dollar? How many generations of collectors have delved into inquiries of knowledge in order to enhance the values of their collections? I must confess that I myself am guilty of such at times over the years.

Many years ago when I was in high school Walter Breen used to have a column in the magazine *COINS*. The column was called "Bristles & Barbs" and usually on the other side of the page you could find Carl Allenbaugh's "Expertease".

"Unfortunately, ideals are made of perfect principles but men are made of flaws." – Carl H. Allenbaugh
(November 3rd, 1918 – November 7th, 1981)

Breen understood collectors but I think Allenbaugh comprehended why they were Numismatists. I think the editors of *COINS* knew both.

Greg N. Mirsky

SUSCC Secretary's Report:

Welcome to our new SUSCC member:

R-4038 James Driscoll, MA

2011 SUSCC dues not received from the following:

Robert Alexander, NY
Michael Connelly, CA
Roderick Gaddy Sr., TX
Michael Gennaro, FL
David Harper, WI
Alan R. Jackson, ME
Brenda Keople, IL

Charles R. Lipcon, FL
David Paternoster, AZ
Dave G. Provost, NC
Robert Rowe Jr., NY
Bob Rudd, MD
Shawn Seale, CA
Mike L. Steeleman, TN

Resigned:

James Berryhill, TX
Alan Weissman, SC

Mail Address NG:

Wayne Hummel, LA

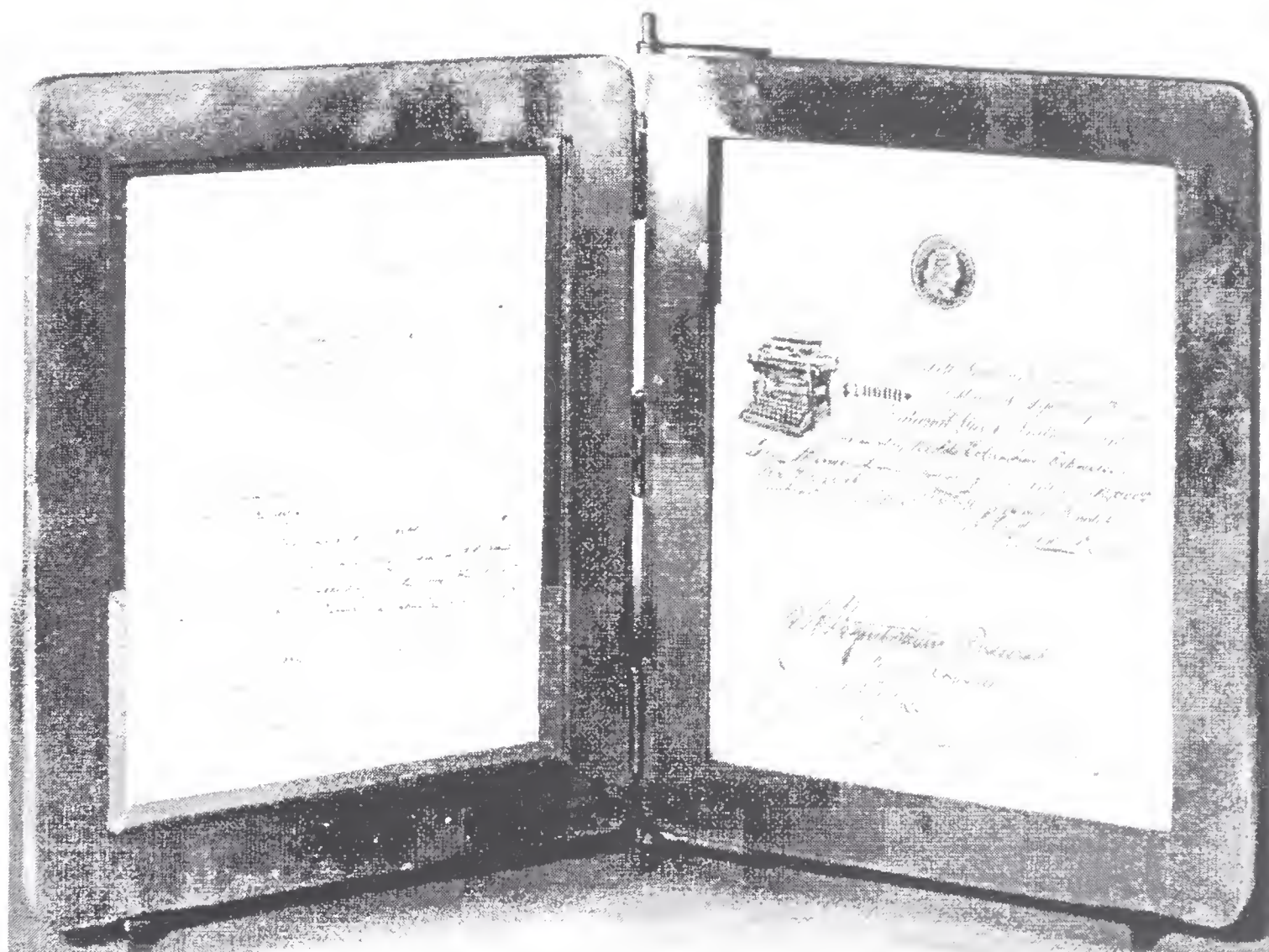
A great member has passed on:

John A. Merz, MD

NOTE: *The Commemorative Trail* is now mailed First Class.

Columbian Souvenir Coin *First Strike*

By Russell M. Frank



For a number of years now, there has been controversy swirling around the striking of the first Columbian Exposition half dollar. The Exposition Company in Chicago was attempting to raise much needed capital to help defray the growing expenses of the world's fair. They petitioned Congress in early 1892 for an appropriation of \$5 million. This was less than half of what the Exposition Company had already invested in the endeavor through private stock offerings, etc. Finally on August 5, 1892, after months of deliberation, Congress approved an appropriation of \$2.5 million in the form of 5 million

commemorative half dollar coins minted from non-current subsidiary silver coins in the Treasury. After feeling they were slighted by the government, the Exposition Company decided they could still raise the needed funds if they marketed and sold the coins at a premium. Each Columbian Souvenir Coin (or Columbian Exposition half dollar as it was later called) was to be sold for 2X face value or \$1.00 each. At the suggestion of The Evening Post (Chicago) newspaper to generate publicity and further promote the sale of the coins, it was decided to offer the first strike to the highest bidder. The Post started the bidding war on August 10, 1892 with a \$50 bid. For the next two months, the Exposition Company was bombarded daily with ever increasing offers in increments of \$25 to \$50 until September 29th when it reached \$1.050 offered by the Western Electric Company. There it remained for a time. Finally on October 10th, 1892, as a publicity stunt, the firm of Wyckoff, Seamans & Benedict (who in 1886 purchased the typewriter business from E. Remington and Sons, later known as the Remington Typewriter Company) trumped all prior offers with their now famous \$10,000 bid. This substantial offer was to remain the highest price ever paid for a US coin until well into the 20th century.

On November 19, 1892, after months of preparation, it was time to begin minting of the souvenir coins at the Philadelphia mint. As one could imagine, there was great attention paid to the details of the much publicized first strike. After all, it was a staggering sum being offered for such a coin. There was no room for error or for disappointment to the Exposition Company or the buyer. It is therefore no surprise that security was at a maximum. No less than a dozen individuals witnessed the event. One witness was a representative from the Exposition Company itself, James W. Ellsworth, who was there to verify what he saw back to the officials of the Exposition.

Much of the modern day controversy, however, originates from details surrounding this event. A story first came to light in the early 1980's that the well known coin collector James W. Ellsworth, also an Exposition Director, intentionally switched coins and the real first strike was actually the coin in an envelope marked No. 2 (one of the 104 proof strikes). This same pedigreed coin was documented as lot #127 in the Superior Auction Galleries sale on August 11, 1991 of the Larry Shepherd Collection of U.S. Commemorative Coinage. At the time of the sale, it too realized a staggering sum of \$14,300 (including the 10% buyer's fee) for the PCGS PR63 example. The reason it garnered such attention and such a final bid many believe is a result of this conjecture. Could it actually be the first strike of the Columbian Exposition half dollar rather than the one delivered to Wyckoff, Seamans & Benedict? If that were the case, this coin would clearly be the more desired and valuable of the two.

After years of research, I believe that this controversy can finally be put to rest by using three irrefutable proofs. One involves the minute details found in the newspaper articles of the time, another involves the number of witnesses and Mint Superintendent Bosbyshell's signed and notarized affidavit, and the third is from promotional material distributed at the time of the fair attesting to the fact that the first strike was indeed the one delivered to the representative of Wyckoff, Seamans & Benedict. I therefore submit the following evidence for review:

There are no official Mint records of the time, but several contemporary newspaper articles chronicled the event. A careful study of articles across the country shows that many of them had the same or similar wording, but were edited to fit the space and/or the audience. An oft quoted article, found in the November 20, 1892 Chicago Tribune

newspaper, which is referenced in many of the detailed histories and descriptions of the Columbian half dollar is missing key details which are present in at least two New York papers. Following is an excerpt from the New York Times article published November 20, 1892 titled "World's Fair Coinage Begun Yesterday at the Philadelphia Mint". I have underlined those portions that are in the Times article, but are not found in the Chicago Tribune article. The articles are identical word for word other than the underlined portions.

"...The preparation for to-day's event had been a subject of great anxiety and interest to Superintendent Bosbyshell and his assistants for some time past, and this morning at 10 o'clock found all arrangements fully completed in accordance with carefully-prepared plans.

When the hour arrived Superintendent Bosbyshell was summoned to the pressroom by Chief Coiner William S. Steele, while engraver Charles Barber, who designed the famous coin; Chief Clerk M. H. Cobb, and others assembled as witnesses. They gathered around an improved automatic, toggle-joined coining press, a noiseless, powerful, highly-polished, and wonderfully-accurate machine, which excites the admiration of all visitors.

Two dies, one bearing the impression to be stamped upon the obverse face and the other the reverse, and the only pair in existence, were already in place. Beside the press stood a receptacle containing hundreds of shining planchets – blank silver pieces, polished and milled, ready for stamping. No power was applied to the machine for the first test. Instead, Foreman Albert Downing placed one of the planchets in the receiver and grasped the lever which raised the lower die, while Edwin Cliff, his assistant, stood at the balance wheel. Then came the critical moment.

In another second the blank coin, which might be worth \$10,000, or, if imperfect, about 35 cents, appeared. Unfortunately the first attempt was a failure. Just a little flaw in the planchet, or perhaps a little speck of dirt or grease smeared upon its face, caused the coin's rejection.

Cliff picked it carefully from the die – for such coins are not allowed to drop into the box beneath, lest they be marked by the fall. To an ordinary observer it might have appeared perfect, but the coiner and the designer examined it under a glass. One glance was enough.

A fatal flaw was revealed, and the verdict which consigned the prospective ten-thousand-dollar beauty to the scrap box was pronounced. A hammer was at hand, and what might have been the most famous coin in history was battered into comparatively worthless metal.

The next attempt was made more carefully for the reputation of the coiners was at stake, and they had resolved that the first souvenir of exposition should be a marvel of perfection and beauty.

The planchet, before being accepted, was examined under the microscope and found without blemish. For the second time the two workmen turned the press by hand, while the spectators waited in suspense.

Again the coin was lifted from the face of the steel die and critically examined by Coiner Steele, Engraver Barber, and the Superintendent Bosbyshell. Every line was sharply defined, and the strong features of the discoverer of America, which adorn the

face of the coin, seemed to look approvingly on the work. Columbus himself could not have done better, and Uncle Sam's reputation as an artist was vindicated....."

This article and an identical one in the New York Herald, specifically state that the first coin struck with a defect was immediately destroyed using a hammer at hand.

Similarly, Mint Superintendent Bosbyshell (an eye witness to the event) signed and had notarized an affidavit that accompanied the coin as it journeyed to Chicago and the eventual buyer. This affidavit further confirms that this was the true first strike.

**MINT OF THE UNITED STATES AT PHILADELPHIA, PENN.
SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE . NOV. 19, 1892.**

I hereby certify that the souvenir coin in box marked No. 1 was the first piece struck from the dies adopted for the Columbian half dollar, and sealed up in my presence and in the presence of the coiner, and delivered to Mr. James W. Ellsworth of the Columbian Exposition Directory.

O. C. BOSBYSHELL, Superintendent

This affidavit is permanently enshrined with the accompanying coin in a sealed glass and brass framed case. See the photo courtesy of the Field Museum of Natural History.

Finally, we have an excerpt from a rare promotional piece given out to visitors of the Remington Typewriter exhibit in the northeast corner of the Manufacturers and Liberal Arts Building on the fairgrounds.

"...Every precaution has been taken to preserve the identity of the coin. Accompanied by a sworn certificate from the superintendent of the mint, the coin came to Chicago carefully packed in a special box bearing the mint's seals. These seals were broken in the presence of witnesses representing both the exposition and the Remington Company. The coin was then enclosed in a temporary glass case, which was immediately sealed up and deposited in the presence of the same witnesses in a safety deposit vault, one key of which was held by the exposition company and the other by the typewriter company. A few weeks ago the coin was removed from the vault and an expert from Spaulding's engraved a private mark on its face; it was then placed in a permanent case composed of cast brass and plate glass. With it were locked up the several certificates; the case was then hermetically sealed, the key-holes cemented and the keys destroyed....."

This piece of ephemera states that every precaution was taken to preserve the identity of the first strike. It also gives many details surrounding the heightened security in handling the coin from the Mint to the buyer.

In the end, the true No. 1 strike was securely delivered to representatives of the Wyckoff, Seamans & Benedict Company on December 19, 1892. It was carefully marked and then permanently sealed into a brass and glass case for display at the Exposition. At the close of the Fair, it was donated to the Field Columbian Museum in Chicago where it still resides in their vault. Like a good novel, the story of a possible switch by Ellsworth of the true first strike makes for good reading, but in the end it is still fiction. Nothing contrary to what was recorded at the time has been found to support such conjecture. ♣

BEING THERE...

‘THE LIBERTY BELL’ & IT’S COINAGE

By Darrin Dayton (R-3048)



Liberty Bell

Never send to know for whom the bell tolls: It tolls for thee.

These are the famous words of the English poet John Donne, written nearly 400 years ago, yet they still ring true (pardon the pun) today. For centuries, bells have been used as a practical tool

for signifying many things. The top of the hour, from a church steeple. A warning to other ships in a foggy port. And of course, a call to assembly or public gathering, from high atop a civic building.

Perhaps the most famous bell in our United States is the Liberty Bell in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Years ago, I had the opportunity to visit a relative in Philadelphia. As a good host she took me to some of the historically significant places there, one of which was the sight of our famous Liberty Bell. It was situated at the corner of a park where a long line of visitors proceeded patient towards the famous bell.

After a while, I had my turn at rounding the bell and just standing there for a few moments to gaze at this well-known piece of American history I'd only previously read about or seen in pictures. It appeared smaller than I'd imagined it to be, but no less significant, as my mind wandered back some 200 years to the time of our independence and the call it gave on that July day in 1776 for all people to gather and hear the first public reading of the Declaration of Independence. On that day, it rang loud and clear from the Pennsylvania State House, better known today as Independence Hall, where our forefathers had met to sign this freedom document only days before. No longer high above Liberty Hall, I along with other visitors, was able to see this bell face-to-face.

This famous bell was first ordered by the Speaker of the Pennsylvania Assembly in 1751 as a reminder of the religious and civil freedoms William Penn, the colonial head, had given to Pennsylvania citizens. The Speaker appropriately requested that the following Bible verse from *Leviticus 25:10* be inscribed on the bell...*Proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof:*

When it rang out on that July day in 1776, it was proclaiming a declaration of freedom not only for Pennsylvania citizens, but also, for all citizens in all 13 colonies! In the 1800's after the Civil War, the Liberty Bell toured fairs and expositions as a purposeful reminder of our unity as a nation and the price we all paid together(both North and South) to obtain our freedom from England.

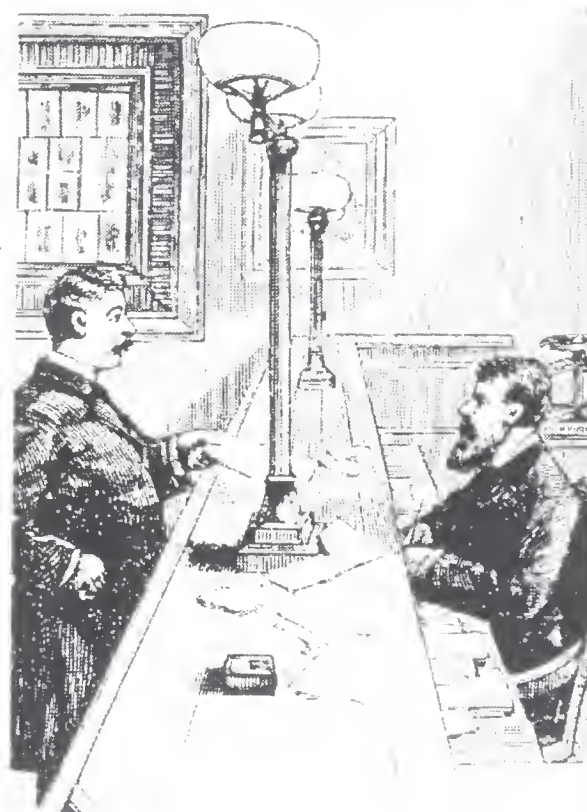
With such a significantly rich and notable history, it's easy to see why our Liberty Bell has graced not only much of our nation's art and sculpture, but also, our coinage. We find it on the reverse of our 1926 *U.S. Sesquicentennial Commemorative Half Dollar*. And famous Liberty Hall is found on the *U.S. Sesquicentennial Quarter Eagle* gold coin from the same year. The former, having a mintage of some 141,000 and ranging in price from roughly \$100 in MS-60 to \$4,400 in MS-65. The coin features Presidents Washington and Coolidge on its obverse. The gold coin has less than half the mintage at some 46,000, and ranges in price from \$500 in MS-60 to \$4,200 in MS-65. This coin depicts an almost angelic liberty upon its obverse and you can see Philadelphia's famous Independence Hall with the location of the Liberty Bell on its top, on the coin's reverse.

Most of us are also probably familiar with our famous Liberty Bell's presence on the special 1776-1976 series of *Eisenhower Dollars*, which were minted in both clad and silver composition. Today, many of these coins can be obtained for \$15 or less.

As I gazed upon our famous Bell in Philadelphia on that day. I was also naturally curious about its distinguishable crack which runs jaggedly up its face from the rim. The Bell received this fatal crack in 1846 and hasn't been it rung since. After decades of being a vocal reminder of liberty and hope, it now remained silent. But still, *the bell tolls*. Still, its voice can be heard today. And *for whom does it toll?* For each American who, like the face of our cracked Liberty Bell, will not only proclaim the truths of our precious liberty and freedoms, but also, live them out with humble consideration of the 'cracks' in our own lives, and with respect for those we see in our fellow Americans. That hopefully together, in the midst of all our imperfections, we may continue to ring out and live out our God given American liberty... in truth, righteousness, justice, and of course, Philadelphia's famous *brotherly love*.

Happy 235th Birthday America! And happy coin collecting!

Some of the Liberty Bell information in this article was obtained at the National Park Service web-site...nps.gov ♣



Continued from page 30.

Collectors should watch out for raw or unslabbed PL specimens unscrupulously offered for sale. Many that were evaluated in coin collections or have crossed my path at coin shows had been polished or, on a few occasions, dipped in liquid mercury, to dupe the uninformed. Other legitimate pieces were whizzed on Washington's portrait to improve the coin's appearance and grade, or they were cleaned, and are not eligible to be encapsulated; others were PL on one side only.

These general rules concerning B.T.W. proof-like pieces can be applied to all proof-like designated commemoratives: for example, the Isabella quarter dollar; half dollars like the Washington-Carvers, Boone, Cincinnati, Columbians, Delaware, Lincoln, Maine, New Rochelle, Rhode Island, Roanoke, San Diego, and Texas; or gold dollars like Jefferson-McKinley, Lewis and Clark, and the 1916 and 1917 McKinley dollars. Many dealers consider NGC's PL designation as borderline. ♦

1946 – 1951

Booker T. Washington

By Anthony Swiatek



Reason for Issue: To perpetuate the ideals and teachings of Booker T. Washington, and to raise funds to purchase, construct, and maintain memorials to his memory.

Authorization: Act of August 7, 1946, with a maximum of 5,000,000 pieces.

Issued by: Booker T. Washington Birthplace Memorial Commission

Official Sale Price:

1946:	\$1 plus 10 cents postage per coin
1946-D, -S:	\$1.50 each
1947 PDS:	\$6.00 set, plus 30 cents postage
1948 PDS:	\$7.50 set, plus 30 cents postage
1949 PDS:	\$8.50 set, plus 30 cents postage
1950 PDS:	\$8.50 set, plus 30 cents postage; \$1 for S-Mint coin
1951 PDS:	\$8.50 set, plus 30 cents postage; \$3 each

Production Figures

Date	Business Strikes	Assay Coins	Proofs	Melted	Net Mintage
1946	1,000,000	546	4?	500,000*	500,000*
1946-D	200,000	113	4?	100,000*	100,000*
1946-S	500,000	279	4?	180,000*	320,000*
1947	100,000	17	0	90,000*	10,000*
1947-D	100,000	17	0	90,000*	10,000*
1947-S	100,000	17	0	90,000*	10,000*
1948	20,000	5	0	12,000	8,000
1948-D	20,000	5	0	12,000	8,000
1948-S	20,000	5	0	12,000	8,000
1949	12,000	4	0	6,000	6,000
1949-D	12,000	4	0	6,000	6,000
1949-S	12,000	4	0	6,000	6,000
1950	12,000	4	0	6,000	6,000
1950-D	12,000	4	0	6,000	6,000
1950-S	512,000	91	0	235,000*	277,000*
1951	510,000	82	0	230,631*	279,369*
1951-D	12,000	4	0	5,000	7,000
1951-S	12,000	4	0	5,000	7,000

* Estimate

Current Market Values

Date	AU-58	MS-60	MS-63	MS-64	MS-65	MS-66
1946 single	\$17	\$18	\$20	\$30	\$60	\$175
1946 PDS set	\$45	\$60	\$75	\$95	\$180	\$540
1947 PDS set	\$80	\$95	\$170	\$185	\$265	\$1,900
1948 PDS set	\$90	\$145	\$175	\$195	\$220	\$1,100
1949 PDS set	\$180	\$230	\$265	\$305	\$375	\$1,200
1950 PDS set	\$95	\$130	\$155	\$165	\$210	\$1,450
1951 PDS set	\$90	\$120	\$150	\$160	\$210	\$935

Designs by Isaac Scott Hathaway

Obverse

The bust of the leading American educator Booker Taliaferro Washington (1856–1915), facing three-quarters to the right. His name is in the lower border; “UNITED STATES OF AMERICA” is around the upper border. Washington appears to be looking at the inscription “E PLURIBUS UNUM”, in two lines in the right field; in the left field are the words “HALF DOLLAR”. Appearing above the denomination is the date of issue, which can be any year from 1946 through 1951.

Reverse

The Hall of Fame for Great Americans, a domed structure with a pediment and arcaded base, constructed 1892–1912. The colonnade houses many busts and tablets honoring famous Americans. It was built as part of New York University's Bronx campus; the site is now part of Bronx Community College. Above the legend "LIBERTY" in the lower border is the first residence of Washington – a slave cabin. The Mint mark (D or S) is below. In the left field are the words "FRANKLIN COUNTY, VA." (in three lines), Washington's birthplace. Between the two structures is the inscription "FROM SLAVE CABIN TO HALL OF FAME"; encircling almost 80 percent of the border area is the inscription "BOOKER T. WASHINGTON MEMORIAL". The motto "IN GOD WE TRUST" is in the lower left field. This issue was created by Isaac Scott Hathaway, who also created the George Washington Carver–Booker T. Washington commemorative half dollars.

Origins of the Booker T. Washington (B.T.W.)

The Coins, Weights and Measures Committee met on July 2, 1946, to consider several House resolutions, including the possible creation of the Iowa, B.T.W., and Will Rogers commemorative half dollars. For whatever reason, the Will Rogers bill (HR-98 and HR-1281) was never reported out of committee. The other two half-dollar bills (HR-6528 and HR-2377) were unanimously passed on July 15, 1946, after just 31 minutes of discussion. Congressman John William McCormack of Massachusetts commented that he had never seen a bill acted on so quickly (except for emergency legislation) after it was reported out of committee. Less than one month later, on August 7, 1946, President Truman authorized their minting. The B.T.W. Act stated that the issue could be produced by the Mints, but for not more than a five-year period.

The well-known artist Charles Keck had previously designed the Lynchburg, Vermont, and Panama–Pacific (\$1) commemorative coinage. He was solicited to create an appropriate representation for the B.T.W. Keck's models were accepted by the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts and by Dr. Sidney J. Phillips, President of the Booker T. Washington Birthplace Memorial of Rocky Mount, Virginia. Suddenly an obscure black designer by the name of Isaac Scott Hathaway (1872–1967) entered the scene. Hathaway possessed the only existing life mask of Washington – and offered to prepare models free of charge. The Commission of Fine Arts recommended Hathaway's work, thereby offending Keck. Keck was paid for his work and bid farewell. The reverse drawing was provided by a nameless Commission of Fine Arts member.



Isaac Scott Hathaway

The issue was marketed under the direction of Dr. Phillips, who was quite influential among the Baptists and black Elks. He claimed that a sell-out of the entire mintage would take only

three months. Great expectations! Production began at the Mints in December 1946. I am often asked: "Was the B.T.W. or Iowa struck first?" The Iowa was first struck on November 20, 1946. On the 14th of

that month, the Booker T. Washington Birthplace Memorial Commission began taking orders. However, sales were disappointing. In February 1947, Stack's of New York City was appointed authorized agent. In November, the Philadelphia Mint produced 100,000 coins; the following month, the branch Mints did likewise. Sales for this issue were not up to expectations, because the mintage figure was high and the issue was not of a new design. It sold as a set for \$6, plus 30 cents postage.

In May 1948, each of the three Mints produced 20,000 coins. The set was distributed by Stack's, Bebee's of Omaha, and the Birthplace Memorial Commission. However, Bebee's advertised itself as the exclusive distributor for \$7.50 per set. To help protect the design from bag marks, etc., Bebee's had the Mints place each coin in a cellophane envelope; the charge for this was 50 cents per coin. Collectors should note that the pieces were made using high-speed presses. After they bounced off each other and were stored in a bin, they were put in the envelopes. Special handling cannot prevent lack of fill marks on Washington's portrait: they resemble small cuts and scratches and are a characteristic of the striking.

During January 1949, the Mint facilities each produced 12,000 of these commemorative half dollars. They were sold at \$8.50 per three-piece set, but, again, sales were not up to expectations.

In January 1950, Philadelphia and Denver each struck 12,000 coins. The San Francisco Mint, however, struck 512,000 half dollars, supposedly designated for building schools and hospitals. (To date no evidence has been found that proves any were built through promotions of the 1950 and 1951 issues.) This set also sold for \$8.50.

In January 1951, the Philadelphia Mint struck 60,000 B.T.W. coins, while the branch Mints produced 12,000 each. In August, a needless 450,000 pieces were struck at Philadelphia. The three-piece set was sold for \$10. (Examine the tabulation at the beginning of the entry for all issues returned for melting and used for assay purposes.)

The hopes of Dr. Phillips about selling out the entire authorization were never justified.

The B.T.W. Today

In circulated condition, the higher mintage dates, especially the 1946 coinage and the 1950-S and 1951-P pieces, are the easiest to locate. They also are the least expensive of all the commemorative coinage produced from 1892 through 1954, except for the common date (1952 Philadelphia) Washington–Carver issue, which is equally priced.

The value spread for the **common dates** grading EF-AU up to MS-64 is so little that collectors cannot afford to aim for anything but MS-64.

Luster will range for the entire issue from proof-like (re-polished dies), to semi-proof-like, to brilliant satiny, to satiny, to dull satiny. Strike will seldom lower grade-value. However, numismatic villains in the form of bag marks, lack of metal fill marks (resembling small scratches or cuts), reed marks, abrasions, slide marks, and hairline scratches, plague the obverse portrait, which is the primary focal area. The surrounding field also takes its share of hits. The design on the reverse offers more protection. The

reverse primary focal area is the log cabin and surrounding field. When acquiring this issue, attempt to locate a flashy looking coin with a portrait as free of negatives as possible.

To date, some error coinage has been reported, but I have not examined any. On some coins of the 1946-P issue, a depression can be observed in the area of Washington's cheekbone, as can concentric marks that were transferred to the die from the hub that created the coin. These marks were made by the Janvier lathe's pointed engraving tool, and should have been removed via polishing at the Mint. To date, no counterfeits have entered the marketplace.

Is Your B.T.W. Circulated or Mint State?

Obverse

Wear will first develop on the cheekbone of Washington. Should his portrait look exceptional, examine any raw or unslabbed coin for possible doctoring.

Reverse

Wear will be observed on coin's central inscription, "FROM SLAVE CABIN...", and on the lower, horizontal section of the Hall of Fame.

Related Material

The 1946 issue was distributed in plain paper envelopes and several types of black leatherette cardboard holders. These have openings for three coins, contained by a movable celluloid strip. Value these holders at \$50 to \$75. Stack's holders (6 × 3¹/₈ inches) are imprinted in silver with their name and New York City at the bottom. The Birthplace Memorial Commission's New York headquarters (261 W. 125th St., N.Y. 27, N.Y.) distributed the three-coin set in a similar holder (6 × 3 inches) with their 12-line blue imprinted advertisement glued to the reverse. Imprinted in gold ink on the upper front part is "Booker T. Washington Memorial Half Dollar". Beneath the coin openings are the Mint marks and at the bottom, "Struck at Three United States Mints" (\$100–\$150). The coin was also forwarded in the same holder, but without the reverse promotion (\$35–\$50).

Continued on next page.

Real United States Money



**THE BOOKER T. WASHINGTON
MEMORIAL HALF DOLLAR**

"A Symbol of Democracy"

This coin should be in every American home. The life story of Booker T. Washington inscribed on the reverse side. Philadelphia and San Francisco Coins, \$1.00 each. Quarter Coins, \$1.50 each. Add 10c Postage for each coin up to 3 coins; 1c to each coin thereafter.

Proceeds to be used in establishing an INDUSTRIAL TRAINING PROGRAM FOR NEGRO YOUTH.

Send Your Order Today!

**Booker T. Washington Birthplace
Memorial**
BOOKER WASHINGTON BIRTHPLACE, VA.
Price \$1.00 and \$1.50

GEMS OF WISDOM

Thoughts From Booker T. Washington's
Philosophy That Have Rendered
Invaluable Service To
Mankind



Booker T. Washington Birthplace Memorial

Booker Washington Birthplace, Virginia

S. J. PHILLIPS, President
EMMETT J. SCOTT, Secretary
PEOPLES NATIONAL BANK, Treasurer

B.T.W. advertising flyer – outside.

Helpfulness Toward Others:

"The highest test of the civilization of any race is in its willingness to extend a helping hand to the less fortunate. Those who would help the Negro most effectually during the next fifty years can do so by assisting in his development along scientific and industrial lines in connection with the broadest mental and religious culture."

Success and Education:

"The end of all education, whether of head or heart, is to make an individual good, to make him useful, to make him powerful; is to give him goodness, usefulness and power in order that he may exert a helpful influence upon his fellows. The Negro should be taught book learning, yes, but along with it he should be taught that book education and industrial development must go hand in hand. No race which fails to do this can ever hope to succeed."

Friendship and Good Will:

"There is no permanent safety for any of us or for our institutions except in the enlightenment of the whole people, except in continuing to educate until people everywhere be too big to be little, too broad to be narrow, be too high to stoop to littleness and meanness. The man is unwise who does not cultivate in every manly way the friendship and good will of his next door neighbor, whether he be black or white."

Glorifying and Dignifying Labor:

"We shall prosper in proportion as we learn to glorify and dignify labor and put brains and skill into the common occupations of life. We shall succeed not by abstract discussion, not by depending upon making empty demands, not by abuse of some other individual or race, but we will succeed by actually demonstrating to the world that we can perform the service which the world needs."

Everyday Christianity:

"I will allow no man to drag me down so low as to make me hate him."

Your PURCHASE of the Booker T. Washington Memorial half dollar or your CONTRIBUTION will aid in the development of a program which will make possible the widespread teachings of the same philosophy expressed above. Such a program will not only help America today but will contribute to the well-being of FUTURE GENERATIONS.

Please address all correspondence to:

Booker T. Washington Birthplace Memorial
Incorporated

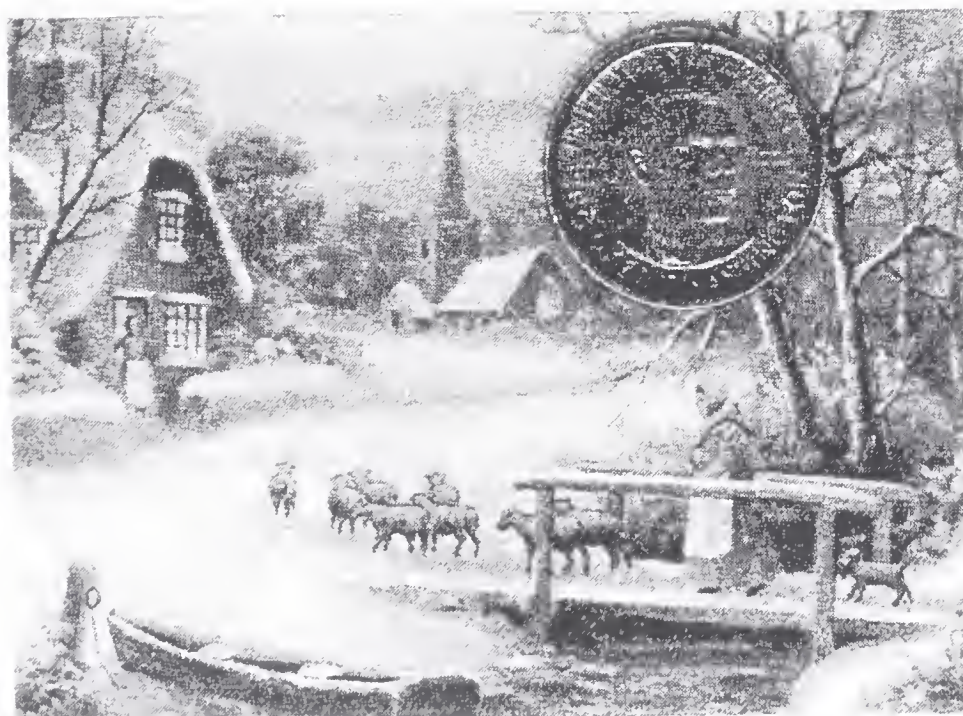
Booker Washington Birthplace, Virginia

B.T.W. advertising flyer – inside

Christmas cards with two different scenes housed one coin, and a mailing card entitled the "Gems of Wisdom" had a coin taped to its inner right center spread. Other B.T.W.s were sold as prizes in a

colorful 10 coin punch board. Christmas holders can be worth \$350 to \$575. Another rare item is the Booker T. Washington Memorial contest certificate, which is a facsimile of a \$3,500 check. If your name was selected first – and \$12 were donated – you were the winner. These items have sold for between \$350 and \$550, when available.

B T W Christmas card mailing envelope.



B T W Christmas card with coin

SEASON'S GREETINGS

*Good Will
The First and Best
Christmas Gift*



There is one Christmas gift that any man can give to any other and that is, a little more genuine and little more kindly interest in his neighbor's troubles, whatever that neighbor may believe them to be. This kind of gift has the advantage that it will be received with just as much gratitude by a rich man from a poor man, by a white man from a black man, as by a poor man from a rich man, or a black man from a white man. Good will was the first Christmas gift and it is still the best.

—BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

Booker T. Washington Birthplace Memorial

Rocky Mount, Virginia

COPY. 1947

B T W "peek-a-boo" Christmas card with coin

Helpfulness Toward Others

"The highest test of the civilization of any race is in its willingness to extend a helping hand to the less fortunate."

YOUR Purchase

of the Booker T. Washington Memorial Half Dollar or your contribution will aid in the development of a program which will make possible the widespread teachings of the same philosophy herein expressed. Such a program will not only help America today but will contribute to the well-being of future generations.

Please Address All Correspondence to
Booker T. Washington Memorial Institute
Booker Washington Birthplace, Virginia

We are Cooperating in this Worthy Cause

GEMS OF WISDOM

By

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

We Invite You

To help in perpetuating his ideals and teachings by purchasing Booker T. Washington Memorial Half Dollars
at \$1.00 each

Circulated by

Booker T. Washington Memorial
Institute

Established at His Birthplace in Franklin County,
Virginia, to Perpetuate His Ideals and Teachings

Booker Washington Birthplace, Virginia

S. J. PHILLIPS, President

B T W coin holder - outside

WHY A BOOKER T. WASHINGTON SCHOOL OF INDUSTRIAL TRAINING?

For Young Negro Men and Women Below High School and College Levels

1. Very few of America's 14,000,000 Negroes have received high school, college, or industrial training. Their ability to produce the goods that make up our national wealth has not been developed because they lack training. The Booker T. Washington School of Industrial Training will make it possible for many of these people to develop their capacities.

2. Although there is a grave need for industrial training in the United States, there are practically no facilities open to our millions of Negroes. The Booker T. Washington School of Industrial Training will be an important step towards correcting this situation.

3. The G. I. Bill of Rights does not help thousands of Negro Veterans who lack the educational qualifications to enter existing schools and colleges. Such veterans can receive training at the Booker T. Washington School.



4. A community's economic welfare depends largely upon the training and efficiency of its labor force. Many communities throughout the nation are impoverished because of a lack of trained

and efficient workmen. The Memorial's training program will help raise living standards in hundreds of these communities.

5. Crime breeds among the poor and ignorant. The major portion of America's criminals come from among the group for whom this educational guidance work is planned. Proper industrial training today will help build better citizens tomorrow.

6. Booker T. Washington thought and lived goodwill between the races. He always opposed racial agitation and said, instead, that the Negro people can best advance and progress by developing their abilities, by their work and through friendship and respect for other races. This school, established at his birthplace, will help keep his teachings alive and advance his ideals of friendship and respect among all Americans.

7. The Booker T. Washington School of Industrial Training will be a practical incentive for thousands of Negroes to take up industrial training, to develop skills in essential trades, and so to become self-respecting citizens and assets to their communities and to the nation.

B T W mailing envelope insert



AUTHORIZED BY SPECIAL ACT OF THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES

**Booker T. Washington
Memorial
Coin**

(LEGAL U. S. HALF DOLLAR)

Issued "To commemorate the life and perpetuate the ideals and teachings of Booker T. Washington, a great American . . ."

Excerpt from bill enacted by the
79th Congress of the United States.

C

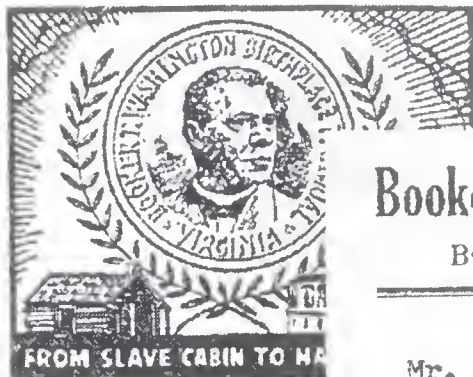
B.T.W. "peek-a-boo" coin holder — outside.

To honor the memory of Booker T. Washington, a great American, the United States Government has authorized the coinage of a limited number of Booker T. Washington Birthplace Memorial half-dollars. These coins are to be sold at a premium to finance a National Industrial Training School at his birthplace and similar schools throughout the nation for Negroes who have been unable to attend high school or college. By training thousands upon thousands of Negro Americans in industrial skills and crafts, the schools will help advance the welfare of the entire nation.

The State of Virginia has appropriated an amount sufficient to restore the cabin in which Booker T. Washington was born, to erect a shaft, and build a Memorial Driveway. The Memorial program is endorsed by many prominent citizens, both Negro and White — by 48 State Governors — and by the President of the United States.

B.T.W. "peek-a-boo" coin holder — inside.

U. S. Post Office, Established Feb. 12, 1948
BOOKER WASHINGTON BIRTHPLACE, VIRGINIA



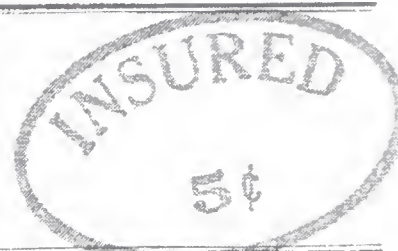
Born in a slave cabin, 1856, on
feet of this post office, Booker T. W.
eminence, dedicating his life to
fellow men. He died in 1915. In 19
stamp was issued in his honor. In
unveiled in the Hall of Fame and
on the currency of the nation.

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON
MEMORIAL
Established to Commemorate H
Perpetuate His Ideals and
S. J. Phillips, Preside
Booker Washington Birthpla

Booker T. Washington Birthplace Memorial

BOOKER WASHINGTON BIRTHPLACE, VA.

Mr. Royal J. Wylde
Sycamore, Illinois



CONTENTS: Merchandise--Fourth Class
POSTMASTER: This package may be opened for postal inspection

B.T.W. mailing envelope with adhesive address label (1948).

Sets dated 1947 through 1951 were housed in cellophane envelopes, then placed inside a paper envelope. Bebee's also offered a single piece in a brown coin envelope (2 x 2 inches) as an official souvenir of the 1947 New Orleans Mardi Gras. It was imprinted with black ink on the back flap, with Bebee's address and the sale price of \$1.25. As these envelopes are quite easily duplicated, they are worth only \$1 to \$3.

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON
WE LIFTED THE VEIL OF IGNORANCE FROM HIS
PEOPLE AND POINTED THE WAY TO PROGRESS
THROUGH EDUCATION AND INDUSTRY

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON MEMORIAL HIGHWAY
FIRST DAY OF ISSUE APRIL 5, 1956
3 Commemorative Postage Stamp
OFFICIAL HISTORIC ENVELOPE
BOOKER T. WASHINGTON
1856-1956
BOOKER WASHINGTON BIRTHPLACE, VA.

CONTENTS: MERCHANDISE
POSTMASTER: THIS PARCEL
MAY BE OPENED FOR POSTAL
INSPECTION IF NECESSARY.
RETURN POSTAGE GUARANTEED.

FROM *Booker T. Washington*
Booker T. Washington Birthplace

TO *Mr. & Mrs. Kiser*
4 - East Church Street
Lawrenceville, Ga.

B.T.W. mailing envelope with adhesive address label (1956).

See page 20 for B.T.W. mailing envelope insert.

Future Potential of the Booker T. Washington Half Dollar

Population Figures

Date	Service	AU 58	MS 60	MS 62	MS 63	MS 64	MS 65	MS 66	MS 67	MS 68	MS 69
1946	NGC	2	0	15	66	605	918	378	54	0	0
1946	PCGS	20	1	18	214	1123	1146	325	31	1	0
1946	Combined	22	1	33	280	1728	2046	703	85	1	0

Date	Service	AU 58	MS 60	MS 62	MS 63	MS 64	MS 65	MS 66	MS 67	MS 68	MS 69
1946 D	NGC	0	0	6	38	353	539	223	45	4	0
1946 D	PCGS	1	1	7	98	636	704	206	17	0	0
1946 D	Combined	1	1	13	136	989	1243	429	62	4	0

Date	Service	AU 58	MS 60	MS 62	MS 63	MS 64	MS 65	MS 66	MS 67	MS 68	MS 69
1946 S	NGC	3	0	9	48	456	746	348	79	5	0
1946 S	PCGS	5	0	18	163	1006	1098	315	47	0	0
1946 S	Combined	8	0	27	211	1462	1844	663	126	5	0

Date	Service	AU 58	MS 60	MS 62	MS 63	MS 64	MS 65	MS 66	MS 67	MS 68	MS 69
------	---------	----------	----------	----------	----------	----------	----------	----------	----------	----------	----------

1947	NGC	1	0	1	7	158	355	101	4	0	0
1947	PCGS	0	0	1	25	356	534	130	4	0	0
1947	Combined	1	0	2	32	514	889	231	8	0	0

Date	Service	AU 58	MS 60	MS 62	MS 63	MS 64	MS 65	MS 66	MS 67	MS 68	MS 69
1947 D	NGC	0	0	1	11	108	269	89	2	0	0
1947 D	PCGS	0	0	1	27	243	342	79	0	0	0
1947 D	Combined	0	0	2	38	351	611	168	2	0	0

Date	Service	AU 58	MS 60	MS 62	MS 63	MS 64	MS 65	MS 66	MS 67	MS 68	MS 69
1947 S	NGC	1	0	3	7	103	301	173	15	0	0
1947 S	PCGS	2	0	2	30	227	482	177	5	0	0
1947 S	Combined	3	0	5	37	330	783	350	20	0	0

Date	Service	AU 58	MS 60	MS 62	MS 63	MS 64	MS 65	MS 66	MS 67	MS 68	MS 69
1948	NGC	0	0	0	1	104	355	158	8	0	0
1948	PCGS	0	0	0	10	310	595	129	0	0	0
1948	Combined	0	0	0	11	414	950	287	8	0	0

Date	Service	AU	MS	MS	MS	MS	MS	MS	MS	MS	MS
------	---------	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----

		58	60	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69
1948	NGC	0	0	0	4	89	342	172	13	0	0
0											
1948	PCGS	0	0	0	20	336	560	179	6	0	0
0											
1948	Combined	0	0	0	24	425	902	351	19	0	0
0											

Date	Service	AU 58	MS 60	MS 62	MS 63	MS 64	MS 65	MS 66	MS 67	MS 68	MS 69
1948	NGC	0	0	4	10	79	351	260	42	1	0
S											
1948	PCGS	0	0	1	18	256	604	201	4	0	0
S											
1948	Combined	0	0	5	28	335	955	461	46	1	0
S											

Date	Service	AU 58	MS 60	MS 62	MS 63	MS 64	MS 65	MS 66	MS 67	MS 68	MS 69
1949	NGC	0	0	0	4	106	298	206	13	0	0
1949	PCGS	0	0	0	26	322	600	196	5	0	0
1949	Combined	0	0	0	30	428	898	402	18	0	0

Date	Service	AU 58	MS 60	MS 62	MS 63	MS 64	MS 65	MS 66	MS 67	MS 68	MS 69
1949	NGC	0	0	1	9	116	289	184	17	0	0
0											
1949	PCGS	0	0	2	30	348	558	391	12	0	0
0											

1949 D	Combined	0	0	3	39	464	847	575	29	0	0
-----------	----------	---	---	---	----	-----	-----	-----	----	---	---

Date	Service	AU 58	MS 60	MS 62	MS 63	MS 64	MS 65	MS 66	MS 67	MS 68	MS 69
1949 S	NGC	0	0	0	4	78	251	305	36	0	0
1949 S	PCGS	0	0	1	20	201	682	321	13	0	0
1949 S	Combined	0	0	1	24	279	1033	626	49	0	0

Date	Service	AU 58	MS 60	MS 62	MS 63	MS 64	MS 65	MS 66	MS 67	MS 68	MS 69
1950	NGC	0	0	0	6	85	246	121	10	0	0
1950	PCGS	0	0	0	14	230	429	121	2	0	0
1950	Combined	0	0	0	20	315	675	242	12	0	0

Date	Service	AU 58	MS 60	MS 62	MS 63	MS 64	MS 65	MS 66	MS 67	MS 68	MS 69
1950 D	NGC	0	0	0	3	96	248	99	10	0	0
1950 D	PCGS	0	0	0	20	264	420	142	2	0	0
1950 D	Combined	0	0	0	23	360	668	241	12	0	0

Date	Service	AU 58	MS 60	MS 62	MS 63	MS 64	MS 65	MS 66	MS 67	MS 68	MS 69
1950 S	NGC	1	0	4	14	150	425	297	47	0	0
1950 S	PCGS	2	0	9	51	374	811	326	14	0	0
1950 S	Combined	3	0	13	55	524	1236	623	61	0	0

Date	Service	AU 58	MS 60	MS 62	MS 63	MS 64	MS 65	MS 66	MS 67	MS 68	MS 69
1951	NGC	2	0	2	24	333	504	80	6	1	0
1951	PCGS	1	0	2	79	649	543	116	5	0	0
1951	Combined	3	0	4	103	982	1047	196	11	1	0

Date	Service	AU 58	MS 60	MS 62	MS 63	MS 64	MS 65	MS 66	MS 67	MS 68	MS 69
1951 D	NGC	0	0	0	6	77	263	159	25	0	0
1951 D	PCGS	0	1	1	17	226	436	168	6	0	0
1951 D	Combined	0	1	1	23	303	699	627	31	0	0

Date	Service	AU 58	MS 60	MS 62	MS 63	MS 64	MS 65	MS 66	MS 67	MS 68	MS 69
1951 S	NGC	0	0	1	4	44	229	231	47	0	0

1951 S	PCGS	0	0	0	9	123	512	298	21	0	0
1951 S	Combined	0	0	1	13	167	741	529	68	0	0

Up to grade MS-65 these coins should be acquired only for the joy of collecting. Interest in the series is lacking: were this to change, prices would rise.

Most people who own B.T.W. MS-64 coinage usually observe enough surface negatives to not even consider slabbing, given the cost of doing so, and the low prices for B.T.W.s. The census would be much higher if such collectors submitted. Should you desire MS-64 coinage, the sleeper is the 1951-S issue. Then consider the 1949-S, 1947-D, 1947-S, and 1950-P strikings. There is average potential in these coins.

At current levels and based on current demand, all sets are fairly priced, but if the series is promoted when the market heat arrives, prices will rise.

The 1947-D, 1950-P, and 1950-D are the lowest populations within the MS-65 rating. The 1946-P and S strikings are the most abundant and easiest to obtain.

Unless you desire the complete set in MS-65 condition, I would recommend only the 1947-D, 1950-D, and 1950-P for type acquisition, and only if the pieces are attractive. Except for the most common issues, which possess little potential, the less abundant dates such as the 1947-D, 1950-P, and 1951-D offer reasonable future potential. I would reduce population figures for each date between 10% and 20%.

As you may have gathered, the real value is for the rarer individual type coins, and some sets are unjustly held down by the more abundant MS-64 and MS-65 1946–1951 B.T.W. coinage within the series. Population figures in total certainly reflect large availability, should a type coin be needed. What should matter is attractiveness: too many coins that I have encountered didn't give a flicker, even though they were graded MS-65. Unless all you want is a representative example, do not buy a common variety.

I would rate the 1947-D and 1951-P the rarest issue in MS-66 condition, along with the 1950-P and 1950-D. One's chance of finding an MS-66 B.T.W. type coin or set lies in the 1946-S, 1946-P, and 1950-S productions. Most collectors would find a complete eye-appealing B.T.W. MS-66 set desirable.

In MS-67 condition, the 1946-S issues make up most of the population, followed by the 1946-P, 1951-S, 1946-D, and 1951-S productions. Observe those low population issues such as the 1947-D, 1947-P, or 1948-P: these would be a delight to add to your collection. One beautiful slabbed NGC rainbow-toned 1946-S specimen sold for \$1,500; the bid price for the set was \$2,000. What this bid means is that there is excellent future potential for this lofty grade. **Two 1946-P pieces sold for \$3,105 and \$3,335.** An MS-68

1946-S example brought \$3,795. As an indication of the importance of a coin's makeup, note that five 1946-D MS-67 NGC encapsulations ranged from \$775 to \$2,530, and three sold in the \$775 to \$805 range. Some person believed the \$2,530 coin would upgrade to an MS-68, but it did not.

Numismatic Guaranty Corporation (NGC) Proof-like Booker T. Washington Census

Date	Service	PL 58	PL 60	PL 62	PL 63	PL 64	PL 65	PL 66	PL 67	PL 68	PL 69
1946	NGC	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1946 D	NGC	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1946 S	NGC	0	0	0	1	7	4	1	0	0	0
1947	NGC	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1947 D	NGC	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1947 S	NGC	0	0	0	3	23	49	17	4	0	0
1948	NGC	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
1948 D	NGC	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1948 S	NGC	0	0	0	0	0	12	11	1	2	0
1949	NGC	0	0	0	0	2	6	0	0	0	0
1949 D	NGC	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1949 S	NGC	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
1950	NGC	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1950 D	NGC	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1950 S	NGC	0	0	0	0	8	23	14	0	0	0
1951	NGC	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1951 D	NGC	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
1951 S	NGC	0	0	0	0	2	14	13	1	0	0

Should one possess a proof-like MS-63 piece, it will pay to submit it if it is not cleaned or whizzed. Such a coin will certainly bring much more money than if kept unslabbed (a PL surface must be present on both sides of the coin). These coins were produced from re-polished dies, and are not abundant. I know of collectors who will pay many times over bid for the issue. Early strikes resemble near brilliant proofs on both sides. There is excellent future potential for these in all grades. Note that the PL designation of later strikings can be debatable, if the proof-like look is limited or borderline.

To determine if your coin is proof-like, you should be able to read the reflected small print (10-point: approximately one-eighth of an inch high) on a standard business card held from two to approximately four inches away from the coin. How strong is the coin you are examining? At what distance does the print begin to blur on both sides? Is it 2.5 inches or 3.8 inches? (For more information, see the section "Pricing Proof-like Commemorative Coinage" in Topic 2, "Commemorative Proof-like Coinage.")



1936 HALF DOLLAR ARKANSAS-ROBINSON

The 100th anniversary of Arkansas' statehood called for a number of celebrations, the grandest of which was scheduled for 1936 at the state capital of Little Rock. Noting the success of other states in funding such events through the sale of commemorative coins, a similar plan was devised by a state-appointed group calling itself the Arkansas Honorary Centennial Celebration Commission; this name was later shortened to the Arkansas Centennial Commission. Acting promptly, the Commission got its bill passed by Congress May 14, 1934, authorizing the coinage of 500,000 half dollars honoring Arkansas' statehood centennial. The review process was no doubt eased by the fact that Arkansas' Joseph T. Robinson was Senate Majority Leader and, until his death in 1937, the most influential figure in Congress. Robinson would later be recognized (against his own wishes) with an additional authorization of Arkansas halves featuring his portrait. This coin is usually collected as a distinctive issue from the regular type.

The first Europeans to enter what is now Arkansas were led by Hernando de Soto of Spain, who explored the area in 1541-42 but evidently found no reason to remain. More than a century later, Frenchmen Jacques Marquette and Louis Joliet passed through Arkansas while canoeing down the Mississippi River in 1673. They too moved on, but were followed a few years later by Robert La Salle. It was his lieutenant, Henri de Tonti, who established a trading post along the river in 1683 for exchanges with the native Quapaw. Through warfare, often in distant lands, Arkansas passed from France to Spain and then back to France again. It was ultimately sold to the United States as part of the Louisiana Purchase in 1803. Arkansas was included within the Missouri Territory from 1812 to 1819, but when Missouri achieved statehood, the Arkansas Territory was established. By 1836, enough settlers were living there for it to be admitted to

the Union on June 15 as the 25th state. Siding with the Confederacy during the Civil War, Arkansas was not readmitted to the Union until 1868, three years after the war's end.

The language of the Arkansas commemorative coin bill passed in 1934 conveniently omitted any reference to a place or date of issue, yet it specified that the coins were to be delivered only to the Commission or its designated agent "at such times as they shall be requested." With so generous an authorization, the Commission could and did request that Arkansas halves be coined at all three mints and in several consecutive years. If this weren't enough to aggravate collectors (who naturally sought completeness in their sets), the Commission's clumsy and sometimes suspect handling of distribution further fueled the fires of resentment surrounding this and other "serial" commemoratives.

To advance the sale of Arkansas halves even further, the Commission sought to create new designs commemorating the same theme. This move was prompted by the Texas Centennial Commission's scheme to have five new reverse types adapted to its existing commemorative obverse. The Arkansas Commission, however, scaled down its request to just three new reverses. Growing Congressional resistance to commemorative coin abuses led to the Texas proposal failing altogether and the Arkansas plan being reduced to just a single new reverse. Legislation passed June 26, 1936 authorized a supplemental production of not less than 25,000 nor more than 50,000 coins.

The new issue of Arkansas halves would be struck in addition to the regular commemorative type, which had already been produced at all three mints during 1936. The supplemental coins would bear the familiar centennial obverse designed by Edward Everett Burr and sculpted by Emily Bates. The question remained, however, of what would be appropriate for the new reverse. A. W. Parke, Secretary of the Arkansas Centennial Commission, wrote to Fine Arts Commission Secretary H. P. Caemmerer on this very subject. In a letter dated September 3, 1936, Parke requested prompt approval from the Commission of whatever design was chosen, and he added that the Arkansas people were considering the image of a coin which explorer Hernando de Soto was supposed to have presented to an Indian woman during his travels through the region. This idea never progressed very far, and a portrait of Arkansas native Joseph T. Robinson was ultimately

◀ THIS SPECIMEN:
MM

selected as the most desirable subject. In addition to being an important figure in the United States Senate, Robinson was a former governor of the state.

Unlike the long and painful process associated with producing the designs and models for the Arkansas Centennial half dollar, the Robinson coin progressed smoothly and quickly. The selection of professional medalist Henry Kreiss to perform the work was the saving grace, as he proved fully qualified for the job. Kreiss had previously sculpted the models for the Bridgeport Centennial and Connecticut Tercentenary issues, and his model for the Robinson coin was based on sketches created by Enid Bell. Kreiss' model was approved by the Commission of Fine Arts on December 23, 1936.

A large, right-facing portrait of Joseph T. Robinson dominates this coin's reverse (popularly but incorrectly considered the obverse). Arranged in an arc about the periphery is the legend ARKANSAS CENTENNIAL 1836-1936. In much smaller letters to the left of the portrait is the statutory motto LIBERTY. To the right is JOSEPH T. ROBINSON. Below that is letter K, the designer's initial.

Due to the lateness of its approval, this new type was not coined until January of 1937. Some 25,265 pieces were struck at the Philadelphia Mint (15 of these were reserved for the Assay Commission). The full allotment of 50,000 coins was never realized, as the market for commemorative coins took a sharp downturn at about this time.

The official distributor for the Arkansas-Robinson halves was Stack's of New York City. It already held exclusive rights to the 1937-dated three-coin sets of the regular Arkansas halves, so it was only natural to extend its commitment to the series. Offering the Robinson pieces at \$1.85 per coin, Stack's cautioned potential buyers on the order form that "From all outward appearances, this issue will be oversubscribed and sold the day the coins will be released." The lackluster market for commemoratives, combined with growing col-

lector resentment over the proliferation of exploitative issues, conspired to hold down sales. An unspecified number of pieces remained, and Stack's was compelled in 1939 to advertise 500 Robinson halves for sale to the highest bidder. This was apparently just the tip of the iceberg, as dealer Abe Kosoff was rumored to have brokered a deal involving some 8,000 coins. Hoards of varying size remained with dealers through the 1950s.

It's almost certain that most or all of the Robinson halves were distributed within numismatic channels. Though there are very few circulated examples as a result of this exclusive marketing, that doesn't mean that gems are abundant. No special care was taken in the coining or shipping of this issue, and the typical Robinson half dollar will show extensive contact marks and abrasions on the Senator's face. The luster of this coin type is uniformly frosty, though it may be either bright or dull.

Eight satin-finish proofs were reportedly struck, half of these going to prominent coin dealer Wayte Raymond. Since satin proofs are not easily distinguished from conventional coins, expert authentication is required before the proof status of a Robinson half dollar can be determined.

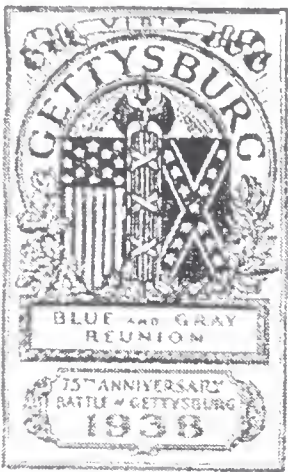
The packaging for this commemorative issue consisted of a four-page, buff-colored cardboard folder. Appearing on the front in black ink is the inscription: SENATOR JOSEPH T. ROBINSON, COMMEMORATIVE HALF DOLLAR; A NEW DESIGN ISSUED BY THE ARKANSAS CENTENNIAL COMMISSION; AUTHORIZED BY SPECIAL ACT OF CONGRESS JUNE 26, 1936; OFFICIAL DISTRIBUTORS: STACK'S, 690 SIXTH AVE., NEW YORK, NY.

SPECIFICATIONS:

Diameter: 30.6 millimeters
Weight: 12.5 grams
Composition: .900 silver, .100 copper
Edge: Reeded
Net Weight: .36169 ounce pure silver

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- Bowers, Q. David, Commemorative Coins of the United States, A Complete Encyclopedia, Bowers & Merena Galleries, Wolfeboro, NH, 1991.
Slabaugh, Arie R., United States Commemorative Coinage, Whitman Publishing Co., Racine, WI, 1962.
Swiatek, Anthony, Commemorative Coins of the United States, Identification and Price Guide, Coin World, Sidney, OH, 1993.
Swiatek, Anthony & Breen, Walter, The Encyclopedia of United States Silver and Gold Commemorative Coins 1892-1954, F.C.I. Press, Arco Publishing Co., New York, 1981.
Taxay, Don, An Illustrated History of U.S. Commemorative Coinage, Arco Publishing Co., New York, 1967.
Yeoman, R. S., A Guide Book of United States Coins, 48th Edition, Western Publishing Co., Racine, WI, 1994.



PENNSYLVANIA STATE COMMISSION

SENATOR JOHN S. RICE, CHAIRMAN
DR. HENRY W. A. HANSON
ADJUTANT GENERAL FREDERICK B. KERR
COLONEL VICTOR C. MATHER
HON. WILLIAM S. MCLEAN
GERALD P. O'NEILL
HON. WILLIAM A. SCHNADER
GENERAL EDWARD C. SHANNON

Headquarters
HOTEL GETTYSBURG
Gettysburg, Pennsylvania

PAUL L. ROY
Executive Secretary

HON. GEORGE H. JERNSTADT
SECRETARY OF WAR
HON. HUGH L. WHITE
GOVERNOR OF MISSISSIPPI
HON. JOSEPH F. GUFFEY
U. S. SENATOR, PENNSYLVANIA
HON. HARRY L. HAINES
CONGRESSMAN, 2ND DISTRICT, PENNSYLVANIA
HON. MARVIN JONES
CONGRESSMAN, 18TH DISTRICT, TEXAS

Edgar P. Crouse,

314 East 201 St.,

New York City, N. Y.

Enclosed please find two Gettysburg
commemorative coins as per your order.

If you wish additional coins please notify
us at once and enclose remittance at the rate of
\$1.65 per coin.

Pennsylvania State Commission

Gettysburg, Pennsylvania

Here are some seldom seen
examples of Gettysburg
paperwork - confirmation
card and packing invoice.
The letterhead of the PA
State Commission is not
only impressive, but
highly prized for its
artistic merit. It's
really a shame more of
this type of material
wasn't kept as it adds
a new meaning to any
collection. Courtesy of
Charlie Boyd (LM-19, AL)

Gettysburg, Pennsylvania

Dear Sir:

The Pennsylvania state commission will handle sale and distribution of
the Gettysburg commemorative half-dollars.

The price is \$1.65 per coin. We do not have order blanks and therefore
make no C. O. D. shipments.

The commission has requested 20,000 coins from the Philadelphia mint,
15,000 from the Denver mint and 15,000 from the San Francisco mint.

We will deliver coins as soon as they are minted which we hope will be
within several months. We are accepting orders.

Pennsylvania State Commission.

Paul L. Roy, Executive Secretary.

You have ordered 2 coins
We acknowledge receipt of \$ 3.30 from you.

Collect or Retire!

You can retire to Phoenix , Arizona where...

1. You are willing to park 3 blocks away because you found shade.
2. You've experienced condensation on your hiney from the hot water in the toilet bowl.
3. You can drive for 4 hours in one direction and never leave town.
4. You have over 100 recipes for Mexican food.
5. You know that "dry heat" is comparable to what hits you in the face when you open your oven door.
6. The 4 seasons are: tolerable, hot, really hot, and ARE YOU KIDDING ME?

OR

You can retire to California where...

1. You make over \$250,000 and you still can't afford to buy a house.
2. The fastest part of your commute is going down your driveway.
3. You know how to eat an artichoke.
4. You drive your rented Mercedes to your neighborhood block party.
5. When someone asks you how far something is, you tell them how long it will take to get there rather than how many miles away it is.
6. *The 4 seasons are: Fire, Flood, Mud, and Drought.*

OR

You can retire to New York City where...

1. You say "the city" and expect everyone to know you mean Manhattan .
2. You can get into a four-hour argument about how to get from Columbus Circle to Battery Park, but can't find Wisconsin on a map.
3. You think Central Park is "nature."
4. You believe that being able to swear at people in their own language makes you multi-lingual.
5. You've worn out a car horn. (Ed. Note if you have a car).
6. You think eye contact is an act of aggression.

OR

You can retire to Minnesota where...

1. You only have four spices: salt, pepper, ketchup, and Tabasco .
2. Halloween costumes fit over parkas.
3. You have more than one recipe for casserole.
4. Sexy lingerie is anything flannel with less than eight buttons.
5. The four seasons are: winter, still winter, almost winter, and construction.

OR

You can retire to the Deep South where...

1. You can rent a movie and buy bait in the same store.

2. "Y'all" is singular and "all y'all" is plural.
3. "He needed killin" is a valid defense.
4. Everyone has 2 first names: Billy Bob, Jimmy Bob, Mary Ellen, Betty Jean, Mary Beth, etc.
5. Everything is either "in yonder," "over yonder" or "out yonder." It's important to know the difference, too.

OR

You can retire to Colorado where...

1. You carry your \$3,000 mountain bike atop your \$500 car.
2. You tell your husband to pick up Granola on his way home and so he stops at the day care center.
3. A pass does not involve a football or dating.
4. The top of your head is bald, but you still have a pony tail.

OR

You can retire to the Midwest where...

1. You've never met any celebrities, but the mayor knows your name.
2. Your idea of a traffic jam is ten cars waiting to pass a tractor.
3. You have had to switch from "heat" to "A/C" on the same day.
4. You end sentences with a preposition: "Where's my coat at?"
5. When asked how your trip was to any exotic place, you say, "It was different!"

OR

FINALLY You can retire to Florida where.

1. You eat dinner at 3:15 in the afternoon.
2. All purchases include a coupon of some kind -- even houses and cars.
3. Everyone can recommend an excellent dermatologist.
4. Road construction never ends anywhere in the state.
5. Cars in front of you often appear to be driven by headless people.

TALKING COMMEMORATIVES

I used to be on a
box of Quaker Oats!



SOCIETY FOR U.S. COMMEMORATIVE COINS

A Not-for-Profit Corporation



ANA Club Member C-1123580 Since 1984

President Anthony Swiatek
E-mail: USCOINGURU@aol.com

Vice President Gregory Mirsky
E-mail: GRS918@aol.com

Editor & Secretary Gary Beedon
E-mail: beedon@earthlink.net

Treasurer Mary Beedon
E-mail: beedon@earthlink.net

Publication Historian Clark Fogg
E-mail: cfogg@beverlyhills.org

Are You Moving?
Please send us your new address!

SUSCC Mailing Address:

Gary Beedon
P.O. Box 2335
Huntington Beach, CA 92647

E-mail:

beedon@earthlink.net

Telephone:

(714) 963-6138

Money Mailer Direct Response, LLC, Savannah, GA
prints *The Commemorative Trail.*

Membership Application

Society for U.S. Commemorative Coins

I hereby apply for membership in the *Society for U.S. Commemorative Coins* (SUSCC), subject to the bylaws of said Society.

Annual Dues (USA): \$20.00 per adult and \$10.00 per Junior (Age 17 **and** under).

Name

Address

City

State and Zip Code

Daytime Telephone Number or E-mail

Signature of Applicant

Date

Signature and Membership Number of Sponsor (optional)

Birth Date (Junior Members)

Signature of Parent or Guardian (Junior Members)

Enclose dues with your application (copy ok) and send to:

SUSCC, P.O. Box 2335, Huntington Beach, CA 92647